

## Kentucky Division of Emergency Management

### Emergency Response Continues as Waters Rise in Western Kentucky FEMA Damage Assessment Teams to Arrive Tomorrow

For Immediate Release

Contact: Buddy Rogers - KyEM  
502.607.5721  
502.382.6006

Kerri Richardson, Office of the Governor  
502.564.2611  
502.330.6633

Jill Midkiff, Office of the Governor  
502.564.2611  
502.330.1185

FRANKFORT, Ky. (May 5, 2010) - Kentucky Emergency Management officials continue to watch rising river and lake levels and are working closely with local and state officials to prepare for flooding as a result of the high pool.

Most of the rivers in Kentucky have crested, but Lake Barkley and Kentucky Lake will not reach pool until sometime Friday. The U.S. Coast Guard has closed Lake Barkley and Kentucky Lake to all recreational vehicles, citing swift currents, heavy debris flows, spilled hazardous materials and submerged objects.

The Kentucky River is expected to crest at Gratz in Owen County before emptying into the Ohio River at Carrollton in Carroll County tonight. The National Weather Service is assessing the potential extent of flooding in Carrollton and will provide information to state and county Emergency Management and Carroll County elected officials.

The exact timing of the crest of the Green River at Calhoun in McLean County has yet to be determined and the lower Ohio River is yet to crest. The lower Cumberland River is only being affected by the discharge from Barkley Dam. The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is closely monitoring the release and have provided personnel at Smithland in Livingston County downstream of the dam.

USACE also oversees the necessary releases of dams throughout the state. Residents should be aware that these releases are necessary to guard against damaging the dams and to prevent more flooding from rains predicted later this week.

Residents can get more information about rising waters by visiting the Kentucky Emergency Management website at [www.kyem.ky.gov](http://www.kyem.ky.gov) or the U.S. Corps of Engineers at [www.lrl.usace.army.mil](http://www.lrl.usace.army.mil).

#### FEMA Teams Arrive Thursday

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) damage assessment teams will arrive in the Commonwealth tomorrow and begin canvassing flooded areas on Friday. Gov. Beshear asked for a federal disaster declaration on Monday following the weekend's severe storms that caused widespread damage and flooding throughout the state.

Approximately 10 FEMA teams will arrive in Frankfort on Thursday for briefings and will begin statewide assessments with Kentucky National Guard members, Kentucky Emergency Management representatives and local officials on Friday.

### Turn Around, Don't Drown

Do not drive through or wade through any water, no matter if it's just a few inches. Stop, turn around—don't drown. Do not venture onto flooded waterways for recreation. If you must travel by boat, for whatever reason, wear a personal flotation device.

### Assistance for Farmers

On behalf of Kentucky's farm families, Gov. Steve Beshear today requested a disaster declaration from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, as a result of severe storms and flooding that occurred this past weekend.

Preliminary reports indicate that Kentucky farmers have lost crops, livestock and incurred damage to buildings and infrastructure as a result of the severe storms and flooding. These forces have impacted all facets of Kentucky's agricultural industry and assistance from the USDA is critical and necessary to offset resulting income losses.

Information about USDA Disaster Assistance Programs and the Secretarial Disaster Designation process are available at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

### Water Safety Issues

The Kentucky Division of Water reports that, while most drinking water systems are up and running, boil water advisories are in effect for some areas due to broken lines and other factors. Check with your local government or public works officials for current boil water advisory status.

The division also warns against contact with floodwaters due to contamination from sewage, agricultural products and other harmful substances.

Citizens should be advised that water contaminated in one part of the state travels through fast-flowing rivers and streams to other areas, causing widespread bacterial contamination. If you should come into contact with floodwater, immediately wash the affected areas with hot water and antibacterial soap.

### Road Repairs

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet crews across the state are working to repair widespread damage caused by devastating weekend flooding.

Highway crews have been assessing damage since Monday and repair work began Tuesday in many highway districts. Commonly reported damage includes pavement breaks, embankment slides and drainage failures, any of which can undermine the overall integrity of the roadway. More damage could be revealed as high water recedes. In addition, bridges will be closely examined after the flooding.

Repairs that involve busier roadways, longer detour routes and safety concerns will have priority.

### Storms and Flooding by the Numbers

- 73 counties and 28 cities have declared emergencies (list attached);
- 4 confirmed fatalities;
- 263 roads remain closed;
- 1 Red Cross shelter remains open in Nelson County. Other shelters are on standby;
- 170 Red Cross workers are assisting in the disaster.
- 43 Kentucky National Guard soldiers are on duty with more to arrive when floodwaters subside to assist with debris cleanup.

- 86 wastewater treatment plants reported releases of raw sewage due to flooding; 13 systems reported flooding of their entire plants.

For more information, visit the Kentucky Emergency Management website at [www.kyem.ky.gov](http://www.kyem.ky.gov).

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